

**A Report to the Praesidium
of
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
from
The Advisory Committee on Doctrine
and Practice**

August 15, 1951

St. Louis, Mo., January 25, 1952

DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST:

The 1950 Convention of Synod passed the following resolution with reference to a number of memorials which had been submitted to Committee 3:

"WHEREAS, The memorials under consideration contain personal accusations and other matters, all requiring extensive investigation; and

"WHEREAS, Your Committee, for lack of time, could not effectively act on these matters at this convention; be it therefore

"Resolved, To refer the charges to Synod's regularly-set-up channels for action." (*Proceedings*, p. 659.)

Complying with this resolution, the *Praesidium* referred the memorials listed under Section I of this report to the Advisory Committee on Doctrine and Practice.

The *Praesidium*, upon receipt of the Committee's report, gave careful thought and study to it and came to the conclusion to accept it, to make it its own, and to thank the Committee for its thorough, scholarly work. Furthermore, the *Praesidium*, realizing that many are asking what has been done to carry out Synod's resolution—and they certainly are entitled to know—decided that the document should be made available to all those who read or heard about the accusations.

Dr. William Arndt, the author of the essays in question, the Faculty of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Mo., and the Presidents of the Districts that heard and accepted the essays wholeheartedly consent to this report of the *Praesidium*.

Please study this report objectively, carefully, and prayerfully. It is suggested that you place it into the 1950 *Proceedings* as the action taken on the memorials in question according to Synod's resolution.

The *Praesidium* will submit this report to the next convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

J. W. BEHNKEN

OUTLINE

Section	Subject	Paragraphs	Page
I.	ORIGIN OF THIS REPORT	1-2	7
II.	ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTION OF COMMITTEE	3-5	7
III.	PROCEDURE	6-16	7-9
IV.	FINDINGS	17-116	9-38
	1. The Visible Side of the Church	19-27	10-12
	2. Antichrist	28-38	12-15
	3. Conversion of the Jews	39-51	15-17
	4. Resurrection of Martyrs	52-66	18-20
	5. Beginning of the Thousand Years	67-77	21-23
	6. Definition of Non-Fundamentals	78-84	23-25
	7. Non-Fundamental Doctrines and Church Fellowship	85-100	25-34
	8. Those Weak in Faith	101-115	34-37
	Summary of Findings	116	38
V.	ADVICE TO THE PRAESIDIUM		39
	1. Answer to Signers of Memorial 608, 4, a	117-119	39
	2. Answer to Signers of Memorial 608, 4, d	120-123	39
	3. Answer to Signers of Memorial 612, 1, D	124-125	40
	4. Answer to Signers of Memorial 617, 3, C	126-127	40
	5. Answer to Signers of Memorials 637, 638	128-129	41
	6. Answer to Signers of Memorial 609	130-143	41-44
	A. Correct essay <i>re</i> five non- fundamentals	131-132	41
	B. Correct definition of non- fundamentals	133-134	42
	C. Correct essay <i>re</i> non-fundamentals and fellowship	135-136	42
	D. Correct definition of weak in faith	137-138	42-43
	E. Require Dr. Arndt to agree to corrections	139-140	43
	F. Final Paragraph of Memorial 609	141-143	43-44

I. ORIGIN OF THIS REPORT

(1) The Committee on Doctrine and Practice was appointed by the *Praesidium* in July, 1950, in accordance with Paragraph 2.05 in the *Handbook*. The personnel of the Committee consisted of President Walter Nitschke, Pastors Carl A. Eberhard, A. J. Meyer, Victor Mennicke, and Dr. Ottomar Krueger. Pastor Mennicke was present at the first meeting only. His death occurred shortly before the second meeting.

(2) In a letter from President J. W. Behnken, dated January 15, 1951, the Committee was instructed to regard as its business:

Unprinted Memorial 44, *Proceedings*, page 918 (copy sent)

Memorial 608, Section 2, page 588

Section 4, a, d

Section 5

Memorial 609, page 590ff.

Memorial 612, C, D, G, H, page 600f.

Memorial 617, 3, B, C; 4, B, F, page 611f.

Memorials 637—638, pages 641, 642

Memorials 644—645, pages 644—651

Memorial 647, page 654

This report covers Memorials 608, 4, a, d; 609; 612, D; 617, C; and Memorials 637; 638.

II. ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTION OF THE COMMITTEE

(3) President Nitschke was asked to call the first meeting. At this meeting of the Committee, held on February 20, 1951, in Chicago, Ill., President Nitschke was chosen as chairman and Pastor Eberhard as secretary.

(4) President Behnken attended this meeting to help the Committee organize and to discuss its work.

(5) After some discussion concerning the function of the Committee according to the *Handbook* and the previous history of the Advisory Committee, the following resolution was adopted:

"That we understand that *this Committee is to be an advisory committee to the Praesidium of Synod and that our decisions are to be made known to them* first of all and then to others involved, if necessary."

(The word "adjustment" in Paragraph 2.109a of the *Handbook* needs some clarification.)

III. PROCEDURE

(6) In reviewing the materials in the Memorials that were referred to the Committee, two subjects seemed of immediate importance: (1) Unprinted Memorial 44 and (2) the charges against Dr. A. J. Meyer's essays.

(7) Since the material in the latter seemed less indefinite than that in Memorial 44, it was decided to take up the charges against Dr. Arndt's essays first. However, since Dr. Behnken was present at this meeting and was willing to spend some time with us, we reviewed Memorial 44 with him.

(8) On February 22, 1951, a mimeographed letter was sent to Dr. W. Arndt and all the signers of Memorials 608 (4, a, d), 609, 612, D, 617, C. After stating that the Praesidium had referred these memorials to our Committee, the letter went on to say:

"Since there are 25 individuals and 4 congregations involved in these memorials, the Advisory Committee on Doctrine and Practice earnestly urges this entire group to *choose two or three representatives to come together with the Committee and Dr. Arndt* to confer on this matter and to see whether a reconciliation can be brought about. Will you please see that this is done. The meeting will be held shortly after Easter and probably at Chicago. Your group will, of course, pay the expenses of the delegation. Please notify the secretary of the Committee as soon as possible so that definite arrangements can be made. Assuring you that we heartily desire to reach a God-pleasing conclusion in this matter . . ."

Dr. Arndt was asked to furnish the Committee with a copy of his complete essay for study. The essay read at the two California Districts was furnished, and the *Proceedings* of the Western District which contained the other paper involved was procured in enough copies for each member of the Committee.

(9) *Dr. Arndt's reply* to our request to meet with us and the signers of the memorials was to the effect that he felt that the matter should have been referred to the President of the Seminary and the Board of Control. He also stated that since the essays had been accepted by Districts of Synod those Districts were now involved. The opinion of Dr. Arndt was referred to the *Praesidium* on February 28. On March 11 the President of Synod replied that the charges against the essays of Dr. Arndt had been referred to our Committee "because we considered doctrinal essays delivered at District conventions as *publica doctrina* of the Church." Dr. Arndt was informed of this decision. He then *agreed to meet with the Committee but not with the attackers unless the Districts involved were also represented*. He also expressed the thought that since the faculty censorship approved the essays, the faculty also was responsible for them.

(10) *Seven signers of the memorials replied* to the invitation to meet with Dr. Arndt and the Committee. Two of them withdrew their names from the memorials. The others said that they were

not interested in such a meeting, and two of them were offended because the letter had been sent in open mail and because they were asked to pay the expenses of a delegation, whereas the 44 signers of *A Statement* had had their expenses paid to St. Louis.

(11) On April 10 the *Committee* met to review Dr. Arndt's essays and the objections.

(12) On April 11 the *Committee met with Dr. Arndt* and discussed his essays and the objections that had been raised against them. None of the signers appeared.

(13) On April 12 *another letter was sent to the same group of signers* as on February 22, *again urging them to meet with the Committee*. President Behnken had agreed that it would be acceptable to offer to pay the expenses of a delegation of three to five men. The meeting was set for May 22.

(14) *Five replies were received*, most of them more favorable than those to our first invitation. Dr. Dierks still insisted that *all* should be invited and have their expenses paid. Pastor Dahms offered to house some if they came for the meeting.

(15) On May 22 *the Committee met with seven of the signers*: Pastors F. E. Bartling, K. F. Lohrmann, A. C. Dahms, H. Prekel (*em.*), A. T. Kretzmann, Theo. Dierks, E. T. Lams (afternoon only). The essay of Dr. Arndt and the objections to it were gone over point by point. Dr. Dierks was the chief speaker of the group and did most of the talking. A number of times the Committee was asked to tell where Synod now stands and to answer some other questions of a similar nature. The answer to the Committee was that it served only in an advisory capacity to the *Praesidium* and that the answers would come from the *Praesidium*.

(16) Another meeting of the Committee was to have been held on July 11, but only two members managed to appear; so action was postponed until August 15. In this meeting this report was reviewed, revised, and adopted by the Committee.

IV. FINDINGS

(17) In the meetings with Dr. Arndt and with the signers of the memorials almost the entire time was devoted to a consideration of the *eight points mentioned in Memorial 609, "Correct Synodical District Essay."* Dr. Arndt had prepared written comments on these points for the Milwaukee Convention of Synod but had not gotten an opportunity to present them at the convention. His comments are given in full below in connection with each point. The comments of the signers are not verbatim quotations but seek to give their meaning as far as it could be determined. The decisions of the Advisory Committee are at the end of each

section. For convenience, pertinent sections of the essay and the memorial are quoted in full at the beginning of each point.

(18a) *Introducing his comments, Dr. Arndt writes:* "Certain critics attack the essay which I delivered in the Southern California and the California and Nevada Districts in 1949. Let me say, in the first place, that what is attacked is really the position taken by our Synod in 1938. At that time all of our theologians were of the opinion that the doctrinal positions expressed in the Committee Report were correct. Among these theologians were Dr. Engelder, Dr. Fuerbringer, and Dr. Hemmeter. I do not present anything new in my essay as far as doctrinal views are concerned, but I do sponsor the positions which our Synod gave expression to in 1938. In the following I shall look at the criticisms that are offered."

(18b) The position taken by Synod in 1938 was (*Proceedings*, p. 231): "3. That in regard to the points of non-fundamental doctrines mentioned in the Declaration of the American Lutheran Church representatives (Antichrist, the conversion of the Jews, the physical resurrection of the martyrs, the fulfillment of the thousand years) we endeavor to establish *full* agreement and that our Committee on Lutheran Union be instructed to devise ways and means of reaching this end.

"4. That in regard to the propriety of speaking of 'the visible side of the Church' we ask our Committee on Lutheran Union to work to this end that uniform and Scripturally acceptable terminology and teaching be attained."

A. Essay 1. The Visible Side of the Church

(19) The Commissioners of the A. L. C. declared that they accepted the Missouri Synod position as given in the *Brief Statement* of the Church as an invisible body, but they did not consider it wrong to speak of a visible side of the Church if that term were meant to designate the administration of the means of grace. It is evident that here we are dealing with a question of terminology. If anybody desires to call the use of the means of grace, without which admittedly the Church cannot exist, the "visible side of the Church," I cannot see any reason why we should refuse to regard him as a brother on account of his terminology, as long as no other wrong notions try to gain admission in this fashion.

B. Memorial 609

(20) In its *Declaration* the American Lutheran Church has said: "We declare that (to speak of a visible side of the Church when defining its essence) is not a false doctrine if by this visible side nothing else is meant than the use of the means of grace." (*Proceedings*, 1938, p. 223.)

(21) *Lehre und Wehre* in 1904 designated this definition of the Church “unbiblical, contrary to the Confessions, and downright absurd,” and showed how it can become “very detrimental to the faith.” (Vol. 50, p. 445f.)

(22) Our Synod therefore confesses in its *Brief Statement*: “In our day some Lutherans speak of two sides of the Church, taking the means of grace to be its ‘visible side.’ It is true, the means of grace are necessarily related to the Church, seeing that the Church is created and preserved through them. But the means of grace are not for that reason a part of the Church; for the Church, in the proper sense of the word, consists only of *believers*, Eph. 2: 19-20; Acts 5: 14. Lest we abet the notion that the Christian Church in the proper sense of the term is an external institution, we shall continue to call the means of grace the ‘marks’ of the Church.” (Par. 25.) “Not to be included in the number of open questions are the following: the doctrine of the Church and the Ministry . . . these doctrines being clearly defined in Scripture.” (Par. 44.)

(23) But in an essay read to the 1949 convention of the Southern California and the California and Nevada Districts of Synod, Dr. W. A. Arndt says regarding this false teaching of the A. L. C.: “It is evident that here we are dealing with a question of terminology.”

(24) In short, what Missouri has always regarded as being a difference between truth and error and as a departure from the clear teaching of Scripture is regarded by Dr. Andt and the A. L. C. merely as a “question of terminology.”

C. Dr. Arndt's Comments

(25) My position is that if the term “visible side of the Church” is employed to designate the use of the means of grace, then it does not have to be called unscriptural. In that instance we are dealing with a difference in terminology. The *Brief Statement* indirectly agrees, “Lest we abet the notion that the Christian Church in the proper sense of the term is an external institution we shall *continue to call* the means of grace ‘the marks’ of the Church.” It will be observed that the *Brief Statement* here points to terminology. It says, to avoid misunderstanding, we shall continue to use the old terminology. To speak here of a doctrinal error is unjustified.

D. Comments of the Signers

(26) The A. L. C. has never changed its false doctrine that the use of the means of grace is the visible side of the Church. Iowa still teaches this. Here we have the source of all the errors that are plaguing the Church today. From this we have unionism,

papism, chiliasm, sacerdotalism, sacramentalism. They are all due to the false teaching that the *Una Sancta* is invisible and visible at the same time. The *Common Confession* should be clarified to read: "Through the means of grace God creates and preserves this Church, bringing men into fellowship with Himself and thus into spiritual fellowship with one another. However, the use of the visible means of grace does not make this Church visible, for their use does not actually reveal who is a believer and therefore a member of the body of Christ."

E. Conclusion of A. C. D. P.

(27) We agree with Dr. Arndt that this may be called a matter of terminology. The statement of the A. L. C. refers to the use of the means of grace, not to people. Some of the signers in their clarification (Par. 26 above) call the means of grace visible. Furthermore, the A. L. C. says: "Nothing else is meant than the use of the means of grace." We agree with Dr. Arndt that the *Brief Statement* indicates that this is a question of terminology, and it uses the term "marks" of the Church, which certainly designates something visible.

A. Essay

2. Antichrist

(28) The *Declaration* of the A. L. C. stated that the commissioners accepted the verdict of the Lutheran Confessions that the Pope is the real Antichrist, but that they did not consider it wrong if anybody should hold that the antichristian power now in the world would in the future reach a height which it has as yet not attained. Here, too, it is clear that the view in question need not keep us from granting fellowship to the one who proposes it, because he is not denying anything that the Scriptures teach.

B. Memorial 609

(29) In its *Declaration* the American Lutheran Church has said: "We accept the historical judgment of Luther in the Smalcald Articles that the Pope is the very Antichrist, because among all the antichristian manifestations in the history of the world and the Church that lie *behind us in the past* there is none that fits the description given in 2 Thessalonians 2 better than the Papacy. . . . The answer to the question whether in the *future that is still before us*, prior to the return of Christ, a special unfolding and personal concentration of the antichristian power already present now and thus a still more comprehensive fulfillment of 2 Thessalonians 2 may occur, we leave to the Lord and Ruler of the Church and world history." (*Proceedings*, 1938, p. 225.)

(30) That the Pope is the Antichrist is not accepted by the A. L. C. as a *doctrine* of Scripture, but merely as an "historical

judgment." The A. L. C. is willing to accept the opinion of Luther in this matter, because at present there is none that fits 2 Thessalonians 2 better than the Papacy. However, by adding the second statement quoted above, the A. L. C. makes the identity of the Antichrist an open question—Luther may be right, or he may be wrong. The A. L. C. thereby also makes room in its midst for the false teaching that prior to Christ's return (the *Declaration* does not specify which return of Christ—His return to Judgment or His supposed return before the millennium) THE ANTICHRIST will appear and will be vanquished at the first return of Christ. Christ will terminate Antichrist's rule, cause the "first resurrection," and then begin His millennial reign with the saints. (Reu, *Dogmatics*, 1945 ed., p. 375ff.)

(31) *Lehre und Wehre* in 1904 said: "We confidently assert that it is the teaching of Scripture . . . that the Pope is the Antichrist. Here, too, it is a matter of accepting in faith or rejecting a clearly expressed doctrine of Scripture We do indeed reproach the theologians who still expect a future Antichrist that they do not understand these words of prophecy and refuse faith and obedience to the same." (Vol. 50, p. 492.)

(32) Our Synod therefore confesses in its *Brief Statement* that it is a "doctrine clearly defined in Scripture" that "the prophecies of the Holy Scriptures concerning the Antichrist, 2 Thess. 2:3-12; 1 John 2:18, have been fulfilled in the Pope of Rome and his dominion. All the features of the Antichrist as drawn in these prophecies . . . are the outstanding characteristics of the Papacy." (Par. 44, 43. Our emphasis.)

(33) But in the essay under consideration, Dr. Arndt, misunderstanding the A. L. C. position entirely, contends that those who hold that "the antichristian power now in the world will in the future reach a height which it has not yet attained" do not deny "anything that the Scriptures teach."

(34) In short, what Missouri has always regarded as a rejection of a clearly expressed doctrine of Scripture is designated by Dr. Arndt and the A. L. C. as not being a denial of "anything that the Scriptures teach."

C. Dr. Arndt's Comments

(35) The critics misrepresent the position of our Synod. They say: "Our Synod confesses therefore in the *Brief Statement* that it is a doctrine clearly defined in the Scriptures that the prophecies of the Holy Scriptures concerning the Antichrist in 2 Thessalonians 2 and 1 John 2 have been fulfilled in the Pope of Rome and his dominion." That is a very serious misreading of the *Brief Statement*. What it says is: "As to the Antichrist we teach that the prophecies of the Holy Scriptures concerning the Antichrist

in 2 Thessalonians 2 and 1 John 2 have been fulfilled in the Pope of Rome and his dominion." The *Brief Statement* does not say, as is alleged, "that it is a doctrine clearly defined in the Scriptures that the prophecies, etc." In my essay I merely say that if anybody holds, as some in the A. L. C. do or did, that the antichristian power now in the world (the Pope) may in the future reach a height which it has not yet attained, such a view need not be called unscriptural or church-divisive. How any doctrinal error can be found in such a position is inconceivable to me.

(36) Dr. Arndt added that the St. Louis faculty, after much deliberation, handed down the opinion that "the teaching that the Pope is the Antichrist is a historical judgment based on Scripture." He stated that the quotation from *Lehre und Wehre*, cited in Memorial 609, "goes too far."

D. Comments of the Signers

(37) The A. L. C. leaves room for a future Antichrist. The question of Antichrist is a part of chiliasm. The difference between Dr. Arndt and us is that we say the prophecies have been fulfilled, he says that they may be fulfilled in the future.

E. Conclusion of A. C. D. P.

(38) We agree with Dr. Arndt on this point. We note the following:

1. Scripture does not teach that the Pope is the Antichrist. It teaches that there will be an Antichrist (prophecy). We identify the Antichrist as the Papacy. This is an historical judgment based on Scripture. The early Christians could not have identified the Antichrist as we do. If it were a clearly expressed teaching of Scripture, they must have been able to do so. Therefore the quotation from *Lehre und Wehre* (Par. 31) "goes too far."

"The old Lutheran teachers did not, as some have stated, classify the doctrine of the Antichrist as a 'fundamental Article.' Rather they have expressly declared that before as well as after the unveiling of the Antichrist by the Reformation many Christians did not, and do not, recognize the Papacy as the Antichrist." (Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, St. Louis, 1950, I, 81.)

2. The *Brief Statement*, as Dr. Arndt indicates, does not teach "that it is a doctrine clearly defined in the Scriptures that the prophecies . . ." It teaches that "the prophecies of the Holy Scriptures concerning the Antichrist (note, not the Papacy) . . . have been fulfilled in the Pope of Rome. . . ."

3. The A. L. C. teaches that the Pope is the Antichrist. With reference to the future it says that this Antichrist, the Papacy, not a new one, may reach new heights of power. Who can doubt

that if he reads Revelation? To read millennialism into this teaching is absurd.

4. We believe that there is no conflict in the positions of the Scriptures, the Confessions, the Missouri Synod, the A. L. C., Dr. Arndt, and the signers as far as identifying the Antichrist in the Papacy. The conflict arises in holding that this identifying is a clearly expressed doctrine of Scripture, whereas it is not.

A. Essay

3. Conversion of the Jews

(39) The commissioners of the A. L. C. stated that they did not hold that if anybody taught, on the basis of Rom. 11:25-26, that there would take place a general conversion of the Jews, such a view would make church fellowship impossible. That is the position which our own fathers took. We in the Missouri Synod hold that Rom. 11:25f. does not teach that Israel as a nation, but, according to the connection, that all the elect in Israel will be saved. But evidently we are here dealing with a question of interpretation which is not without its difficulties; and since it is an issue which has no bearing on our faith, we need not regard the divergence in question as divisive of church fellowship.

B. Memorial 609

(40) In its *Declaration* the American Lutheran Church has said: "With reference to the question concerning the conversion of Israel, which some find indicated, especially in Rom. 11:25-26, we declare with Dr. Walther that to assume such a conversion 'must not be regarded as a cause for division' (*Milwaukee Colloquium*, p. 156)." (*Proceedings*, 1938, p. 225.)

(41) Dr. Walther did not say that. He did, however, say: "If it had been *only* in the doctrine of the conversion of the Jews that he [Schieferdecker] had been unable to agree with us, we would not have regarded that as a ground for severing relations with him." (Our emphasis.) But when the idea of the conversion of Israel before the end of the world is coupled with chiliasm (the A. L. C. in its *Declaration* puts "the question concerning the Antichrist, the future conversion of Israel, the resurrection of the martyrs, and the millennial reign of Christ" in the same category; cf. *Proceedings*, 1938, p. 224), then it must be rejected as false teaching.

(42) Our Synod therefore confesses in its *Brief Statement*: "We reject every type of millennialism, or chiliasm, the opinions that . . . before the end of the world a universal conversion of the Jewish nation (of Israel according to the flesh) will take place. . . . Scripture clearly teaches, and we teach accordingly . . . that there will be no general conversion, a conversion *en masse*,

of the Jewish nation, Rom. 11:7; 2 Cor. 3:14; Rom. 11:25 ff.; 1 Thess. 2:16." (Par. 42 of *Brief Statement*.)

(43) But in the essay under consideration Dr. Arndt contends that the teaching of "a general conversion of the Jews" is "a question of interpretation which is not without its difficulties" and "has no bearing on our faith."

(44) In short, what Missouri rejects as false teaching is not regarded as such by Dr. Arndt, but is by him and the A. L. C. designated as a "question of interpretation."

C. Dr. Arndt's Comments

(45) The critics misrepresent. They make me say that "The teaching of a general conversion of the Jews is a question of interpretation which is not without its difficulties," etc. What I do say is not that this teaching is a question of interpretation, but that in this matter we are faced with a question of interpretation which is not without its difficulties, which is an altogether different matter. That in this question our fathers took the position which I sponsor in my essay can be shown through a number of quotations. In the *Colloquy with Iowa*, p. 79, Walther is reported as saying: "Sie werden zugeben, der Ausdruck Offene Frage erzeugt leicht die Idee, es handle sich da um Sachen, ueber die jeder denken kann, was er will, weil sie noch nicht entschieden sind. Dazu kann ich die Lehre von der Judenbekehrung nicht rechnen. Das gebe ich zu, dass darueber auch unter Rechtglaebigen eine Differenz sein kann; denn so klar steht sie nicht in Gottes Wort, dass ich sagen kann: Wer es nicht glaubt, der glaubt auch nicht an Gottes Wort. Es gehoert eine ganze Reihe Schluesse dazu, um zur Klarheit darueber zu gelangen, und vielleicht kommt man noch zu einer naeheren Erklaerung durch die Erfuellung. Die betreffenden Stellen sind eben Weissagungen; also kann auch niemand mit absoluter Gewissheit sagen, dass er ihren rechten Verstand getroffen hat." Again on p. 80 of the same work he is reported as saying: "Ich verwerfe freilich die Meinung mancher von einer noch bevorstehenden allgemeinen Judenbekehrung, aber ich mache deshalb niemand zum Ketzer, der sie erwartet, weil sie ja freilich moeglich ist, denn bei Gott ist kein Ding unmoeglich. Auch selbst eine ganz von der meinigen abweichende Erklaerung von Offenbarung 20 werde ich nicht ketzerisch nennen, wenn sie nur innerhalb der Analogie des Glaubens bleibt." Page 84: "Ich werde die Lehre von der Judenbekehrung durchaus nicht als kirchentrennend betrachten."

(46) Dr. Arndt remarked that Stoeckhardt changed his mind on the meaning of Rom. 11:25f., accepting the meaning that "all Israel" is "all the elect in the Jewish nation."

D. *Comments of the Signers*

(47) Dr. Arndt's position is the position of Iowa. It is contrary to the *Brief Statement*. The basic question is whether human opinions are to be taught in the Church.

E. *Conclusion of A. C. D. P.*

(48) A number of points enter into this discussion:

1. The A. L. C. says (according to Dr. Arndt's essay) that the view may be taken that there is to be a general conversion of the Jews and that this view is not divisive of church fellowship.

2. The Missouri Synod (also according to Dr. Arndt's essay) holds that Rom. 11:25f. teaches that all the elect in Israel (not the nation) will be saved.

3. Dr. Walther (quoted by Dr. Arndt) agrees with 2 but says that the question is not divisive.

4. The *Brief Statement* rejects the opinion of a general conversion of the Jewish nation without defining "all Israel" in Rom. 11:25f. It also says that the passages it quotes (Rom. 11:7, 25; 2 Cor. 3:14; 1 Thess. 2:16) are "clear."

(49) Dr. Arndt is correct in stating that his critics misrepresent his position. He says that "in this matter we are faced with a question of interpretation which is not without its difficulties." The truth of this statement is borne out by the fact that Stoeckhardt in his *Commentar ueber den Brief Pauli an die Roemer*, St. Louis, 1907, devotes 15 pages to the three verses Rom. 11:25-27, giving the opinions of a great many writers ancient and contemporary. Evidently the passages are not as clear as the *Brief Statement* implies. Cf. *Expositor's Greek Testament*.

(50) The signers of Memorial 609 are misleading also when they say that "the A. L. C. in its *Declaration* puts 'the question concerning the Antichrist, the future conversion of Israel, the resurrection of the martyrs, and the millennial reign of Christ' in the same category." "Category?" The heading in the *Declaration* is "The Doctrine Concerning the Last Things." This grouping is the historical one when these matters are under discussion and does not carry any false millennial implications here as if coupling the conversion of Israel with chiliasm.

(51) We agree with Dr. Arndt and Dr. Walther that we need not regard the divergence in question as divisive of church fellowship. However, the reason given "since it is an issue which has no bearing on our faith" is not one that we would use in support of our position. We should rather say with Walther: "Denn so klar steht sie nicht in Gottes Wort, dass ich sagen kann: Wer es nicht glaubt, der glaubt auch nicht an Gottes Wort."

4. Resurrection of Martyrs

A. Dr. Arndt's Essay

(52) Rev. 20:4 says that those who were beheaded for the testimony of Christ will be raised before the Last Day, the Day of Judgment. We admit that the interpretation is difficult. Some of us think that St. John is here speaking of conversion, of being raised from spiritual death; others hold that the holy writer is speaking of entering heaven on the part of these faithful martyrs, calling their being taken into heavenly bliss the first resurrection, as distinct from the raising of the body, which will come later. But there are some who say that these words must be taken in their native sense, as signifying an actual resurrection of the body. Now, if this is explained as signifying that their bodies will be taken into heaven and that they will be enjoying the happiness of the mansions above even before the Judgment Day, we need not protest.

(53) The error that we object to is the view that Christ will raise the martyrs and with them form a Kingdom of Glory here on earth, the dream of the millennialists. Such an interpretation is contrary to the clear passages of the Scriptures concerning the last times. But this construction of the meaning is definitely rejected by the A. L. C. theologians. Besides, it should be said that apparently but very few men in the A. L. C. still lean to the interpretation of Revelation 20 which holds that a physical resurrection is there visualized.

B. Memorial 609

(54) In its *Declaration* the American Lutheran Church has said: "With reference to the assumption of a physical resurrection of the martyrs, which some find indicated in Rev. 20:4, we declare that we are not ready to deny church fellowship to anyone who holds this view, merely on that account" (*Proceedings*, 1938, p. 225).

(55) Over against this, our Synod has taught: "The teaching that a special physical resurrection precedes the so-called millennial kingdom has ever been regarded in our Church as a mark of gross and damnable chiliasm" (*Lehre und Wehre*, 18, p. 75). "Let the chiliast be serious with the word 'souls,' and then the whole proof of chiliasm from this passage collapses" (*Synodalbericht*, Western District, 1888, p. 19). "Whoever insists that the believers will rise a thousand years before Judgment Day calls Christ a liar" (*Synodalbericht*, Central District, 1895, p. 90).

(56) Our Synod therefore confesses in its *Brief Statement*: "We reject every type of millennialism, or chiliasm, the opinions that . . . before the general resurrection on Judgment Day a number of departed Christians or martyrs are to be raised again to

reign in glory in this world. . . . Scripture clearly teaches, and we teach accordingly . . . that there will be but one *resurrection of the dead*, John 5:28; 6:39-40." (Par. 42. Our emphasis.)

(57) But in the essay under consideration, Dr. Arndt, contrary to the express words of Scripture that "the *souls* of them that were beheaded . . . lived and reigned with Christ," Rev. 20:4, contends: "There are some who say that these words must be taken in their native sense, as signifying an actual resurrection of the body. Now if this is explained as signifying that their bodies will be taken into heaven and that they will be enjoying the happiness of the mansions above even before the Judgment, we need not protest."

(58) In short, what Missouri rejects as a mark of gross and damnable chiliasm, as being a perversion of the text, and as contradicting other clear passages of Scripture — against that Dr. Arndt and the A. L. C. would not protest.

C. Dr. Arndt's Comments

(59) The critics do not quote everything I said. In fairness they should have included the words: "The error that we object to is the view that Christ will raise the martyrs and with them form a Kingdom of Glory here on earth, the dream of the millennialists. Such an interpretation is contrary to the clear passages of the Scriptures concerning the last times." Those who have read our literature on this subject will recall that the resurrection of the martyrs is always treated in connection with the dreams of chiliasts in general. The position of Nicolaus Selnecker which held that "Gott bis an den Juengsten Tag, von Zeit zu Zeit, etliche der Seinen schon im Voraus auferweckt," is merely called "eine allerdings sonderbare Meinung," but is not rejected as heretical. Cf. *Lehre und Wehre*, March, 1872 (XVIII), p. 75; hence my position, just as the position of our whole Synod in 1938, was, and still is, that if a person thinks Rev. 20:4 refers to the taking of these saints into heaven at some time before Judgment Day, that need not be declared a false doctrine or, at any rate, not something that must be divisive of church fellowship. I myself do not endorse that interpretation at all. In my opinion John is here using the term "resurrection" in the sense of entrance into heaven. But because the passage is so obscure, I hold the interpretation in question need not be branded as heretical. Of course, the raising of the martyrs would then have to be considered an exception from the rule which Jesus teaches John 6:40.

D. Comments of the Signers

(60) You deny a clear statement of Scripture when you teach the physical resurrection before Judgment Day.

E. Conclusion of A. C. D. P.

(61) In his comments Dr. Arndt shows that he does not teach or tolerate a *general* physical resurrection before Judgment Day. In his essay he specifically states that the idea of Christ forming a Kingdom of Glory *here on earth* with the martyrs who are raised is a dream of the millennialists and is "definitely rejected by the A. L. C. theologians."

(62) *Lehre und Wehre*, XVIII (1872), p. 75: "... denn die allerdings sonderbare Meinung Selneckers, dass Gott bis an den Juengsten Tag von Zeit zu Zeit 'etliche der Seinen schon im Voraus auferwecke, ist *toto coelo* von dem Wahn der Chiliasten verschieden, dass Christus zur Inauguration eines gewissen Zwischenreiches tausend Jahr vor dem Juengsten Tage alle die Seinen oder doch die ganze Klasse der heiligen Maertyrer auf einmal, simultan auferwecken werde. Es ist ein alter Grundsatz, dass Ausnahmen die Regel nicht aufheben, vielmehr bestaetigen: so hebt das Statuiren einzelner Ausnahmen, wie es von Selnecker geschieht, die Regel, dass nach Gottes Wort, wenn Christus zum Gericht erscheinen wird, so wenig auf, wie der Glaube, dass schon vor Christo und zu Christi Zeit einzelne ausnahmsweise auferweckt worden sind."

(63) The literalistic reference to "souls" in the Revelation 20 passage by the signers of Memorial 609 cannot be maintained in the face of Rev. 6:9f., where the "souls" are given white robes.

(64) There is no claim in Dr. Arndt's essay that believers (in general) will rise a thousand years before Judgment Day. Such misrepresentations are irresponsible. (Par. 55 above.)

(65) Dr. Arndt agrees with the *Brief Statement* in so far as he does not teach nor does he tolerate the teaching that "martyrs are to be raised again to reign in glory *in this world*."

(66) Dr. Arndt's own belief in this matter is given at the end of his comments, as is also the statement that agrees with the *Brief Statement* again in so far as he says: "Of course, the raising of the martyrs would then have to be considered an exception from the rule which Jesus teaches John 6:40." Since the passage (Rev. 20:4) is difficult to interpret, and since the interpretation which is referred to cannot be regarded as a contradiction of clear passages of Scripture when we accept the limitation given by Dr. Arndt, "If this is explained as signifying that their bodies will be taken into heaven and that they will be enjoying the happiness of the mansions above even before Judgment Day," we agree that we need not protest the view as heretical. We do not accept it as our view, but the signers have not proved that the A. L. C. or Dr. Arndt are teaching "gross and damnable chiliasm," "perversion of the text," or something "contradicting other clear passages of Scripture."

5. Beginning of the Thousand Years

A. Dr. Arndt's Essay

(67) Have the thousand years spoken of in Revelation 20 come and passed, are they in progress of passing now, or are they still lying in the future? These are questions which no one can answer. A difference of opinion obtains here; there are some who think the thousand years are still to be expected. In our Church a different view has generally been held, but no one has presumed to speak with finality. It is evident here that we are dealing with a problem, a real open question, where opinions may differ without prejudice to anybody's orthodoxy.

B. Memorial 609

(68) In its *Declaration* the American Lutheran Church has said: "With reference to the thousand years of Revelation 20 we declare with Dr. Walther (*Milwaukee Colloquium*, p. 157) that "it is not possible to say with absolute certainty either that the thousand years have already been fulfilled or that they still lie in the future." (*Proceedings*, 1938, p. 225.)

(69) It is true, no one can definitely say when the thousand years of Revelation 20 began and when they will end; "however, as soon as someone today places these thousand years still in the future and in consequence teaches: 'Judgment Day does not come for a long time; first must occur a resurrection of the dead,' etc. — as soon as this is taught, then the foundation of faith is subverted." (*Synodalbericht*, Syn. Conf., 1877, p. 31.) Such a one contradicts the clear teaching of Scripture that the time of Christ's coming to Judgment is, and will remain, unknown.

(70) Our Synod therefore confesses in its *Brief Statement*: "Scripture clearly teaches, and we teach accordingly . . . that the time of the Last Day is, and will remain, unknown, Matt. 24:42; 25:13; Mark 13:32, 37; Acts 1:7, which would not be the case if the Last Day were to come a thousand years after the beginning of a millennium." (Par. 42.)

(71) But in the essay under consideration, Dr. Arndt contends: "There are some who think the thousand years are still to be expected. In our Church a different view has generally been held, but no one has presumed to speak with finality. It is evident here that we are dealing with a problem, a real open question, where opinions may differ without prejudice to anybody's orthodoxy."

(72) In short, what Missouri regards as unscriptural and contrary to the analogy of faith is not regarded as such by Dr. Arndt, but is designated by him and the A. L. C. as "a problem, a real open question, where opinions may differ without prejudice to anybody's orthodoxy."

C. Dr. Arndt's Comments

(73) In my essay I state that while in our Synod the view is current that the thousand years of Revelation 20 lie in the past, we need not call the view heretical which assumes that the thousand years are yet to come. On this question our fathers very properly always professed not to have positive knowledge. Thus in the *Colloquy with Iowa*, p. 157, Walther says: "Wir sind in einem Privatkollegium mit ihm (das heisst, Pastor Schieferdecker) ueber- eingekommen, dass man nicht mit absoluter Gewissheit sagen koenne, weder dass die tausend Jahre Off. 20 schon erfuehlt seien, noch dass sie in der Zukunft liegen." That is precisely the position which I give expression to. The critics hold that whoever takes such a position contradicts the word of Jesus that nobody knows when Judgment Day will come. My reply is that if that were true, then all the Christians in the Early Church who thought that John was speaking actually of a thousand years became guilty of such a contradiction of the words of Jesus. My position is that nobody has a right here to speak with certainty. The contradiction with the words of Jesus arises when one professes to have definite knowledge on this point.

D. Comments of the Signers

(74) Objection was made to the term "open question" used here. As soon as the thousand years is hooked up with something else, then you have false doctrine.

E. Conclusion of A. C. D. P.

(75) The signers of Memorial 609 impute things in Paragraph 69 above to the A. L. C. which are not in the *Declaration* when they say: "As soon as someone today places these thousand years still in the future *and in consequence* teaches: Judgment Day does not come for a long time; first must occur a resurrection of the dead," etc., etc. — "as soon as this is taught, then the foundation of faith is subverted." This is a *non sequitur*. The *Declaration* makes no such statement necessary. Furthermore, it is not logical to assume that if one believes the thousand years are still in the future, he must be a millennialist in the sense that he will know just when the thousand years will begin and end. If a literalist believes that they are in the past and will say just when they began; if he does make such a claim, isn't he a millennialist, knowing the time of the Last Day, etc.?

(76) The Missouri Synod does not teach millennialism. Nor does it condemn those who believe that the beginning of the thousand years of Scripture (not millennium) is still in the future. Chiliasm is ruled out in the *Brief Statement* as an open question,

but the beginning of the thousand years falls in with the definition: "Those questions in the domain of Christian doctrine may be termed open questions which Scripture answers either not at all or not clearly." And we should keep very clearly in mind the principle: "Since neither an individual nor the Church as a whole is permitted to develop or augment the Christian doctrine, but are rather ordered and commanded by God to continue in the doctrine of the Apostles, 2 Thess. 2:15; Acts 2:42, *open questions must remain open questions.*" (*Brief Statement*, Par. 44.) We therefore agree with Dr. Arndt on this point.

(77) Omitted by Committee.

A. Essay **6. Definition of Non-Fundamental Doctrines**

(78) *The Position on Non-Fundamental Doctrines.* Non-fundamental doctrines are teachings of Holy Scripture. They are called non-fundamental because they have no connection with the foundation of our faith. For instance, Will all the Jews be converted in the last times? We think that will not be the case. We believe we can prove our position from the Scriptures. But what of it? If they should all be converted, we should certainly rejoice; we are praying for their conversion all the time. If it does not come about, our faith does not suffer.

B. Memorial 609

(79) *A False Definition of Non-Fundamental Doctrines.* In the essay under consideration, Dr. Arndt improperly defines non-fundamental doctrines as "having no connection with the foundation of our faith." This is truly an amazing aberration. Every teaching of Scripture is somehow connected with the organic foundation (Scripture itself), the dogmatic foundation (the various articles of saving Christian doctrine), and the real foundation (Christ). Cf. Eph. 2:20; 1 Peter 1:10-12; also 1 Tim. 5:8.

(80) We therefore request Synod to strike the assertion: "They are called non-fundamental because they have no connection with the foundation of our faith." In their stead we ask that the following be inserted: "They are called non-fundamental because they do not constitute the foundation or object of faith in so far as faith apprehends the forgiveness of sins and makes us children of God" (cf. Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, I, 1950, p. 91).

C. Dr. Arndt's Comments

(81) I defined non-fundamental doctrines as doctrines which have "no connection with the foundation of our faith." "Foundation of our faith" I there use in the sense of "the doctrine on which our faith depends." We are here dealing with a matter in termi-

nology. I can accept the definition of the critics, but I contend that my definition is correct too. Walther, *Lehre und Wehre*, 1868, p. 104, quotes Nicolaus Hunnius to this effect: "Welches Dogma nicht notwendig ist, das ist auch kein Teil des Glaubensfundaments. Kein Dogma, ohne welches der Glaube sein kann oder jemals gewesen ist, ist ein notwendiges; also ist ein solches Dogma kein Teil des Glaubensfundaments." That is precisely what I had in mind when I used the expression "no connection with the foundation of our faith." I could have said: "These doctrines are not a part of the foundation of our faith," which would have been the same thing. My contention is that my definition is practically the same one which Dr. Walther sponsored when he in his famous declaration of 1871 defined "Glaubensartikel" as articles "an deren jedem unser Glaube und unsere Hoffnung haengt" and when he differentiated from these teachings other Scripture doctrines of which you cannot say that our faith and our hope depends on them. The words of Walther (*Lutheraner*, 27, p. 131) should be quoted here because they are basic:

(82) "Wisse denn jederman, der es wissen will, dass wir zwischen Glaubensartikel und solchen Schriftlehren, welche dies nicht sind, einen Unterschied zu machen wissen. Zwar lassen wir uns keine Schriftlehre, sie scheine gross oder gering zu sein, zu einer offenen Frage machen, aber waehrend wir es fuer noetig achten, fuer jeden Glaubensartikel, an deren jedem unser Glaube und unsere Hoffnung haengt, bis auf das Aeusserste zu kaempfen, den entgegenstehenden Irrtum zu verdammen und den hartnaeckig Widersprechenden die Bruederschaft aufzusagen, so achten wir es keineswegs unter allen Umstaenden fuer noetig, fuer andere Schriftlehren, die keine Glaubensartikel sind, den Kampf auf das Aeusserste zu treiben, viel weniger ueber den entgegenstehenden Irrtum, obwohl wir ihn verwerfen, das Verdammnisurteil auszusprechen, und denen, welche nur hierin irren, die Glaubensbruederschaft aufzusagen. Handelt es sich in einem Lehrstreit um solche Lehren, die nicht zu den Glaubensartikeln gehoeren, da kommt uns alles darauf an, ob die Widersprecher zeigen, dass sie darum widersprechen, weil sie sich dem Worte Gottes nicht unterwerfen wollen, also ob sie, obwohl sie scheinbar die Grundlehren des Wortes Gottes stehen lassen, sich den Grund selbst, auf welchem alle jene Lehren ruhen, das Wort Gottes, umstossen."

D. Comments of the Signers

(83) It is so self-evident that that's a false definition of non-fundamental doctrines.

E. Conclusion of A. C. D. P.

(84) Taken with the explanation offered by Dr. Arndt: "Foundation of our faith' I use in the sense of 'the doctrines on which our faith depends,'" and, "I could have said, 'These doctrines are not a part of the foundation of our faith,'" Dr. Arndt's definition of non-fundamental doctrines, while not as clear as it might have been, cannot justly be called "truly an amazing aberration" (79). Furthermore, Dr. Arndt says that he can accept the definition of the critics, contending that his own is correct too. Here is another place where differences might have been adjusted in personal conference. We believe that Dr. Arndt's definition is correct as far as it goes. It does not deny any of the fuller definitions, even if it does not contain all that they do, e.g., Pieper (*Christian Dogmatics*, 1950, Vol. I, p. 91): "Non-fundamental doctrines, as distinguished from the fundamental doctrines, are those Scripture truths which are not the foundation or object of faith in so far as it obtains forgiveness of sins and makes men children of God, but with which the faith of those who have already obtained forgiveness of sins should and does concern itself."

7. Non-Fundamental Doctrines and Church Fellowship

A. Essay

(85a) The matters that I have enumerated in the preceding section belong to the non-fundamental class, and our fathers properly said concerning them that they need not be divisive of fellowship. It is important, of course, that the right attitude toward the divine Word be maintained.

(85b) If a person should think that because a certain teaching is non-fundamental, he may reject it, then he offends against the majesty of God's Word, and his attitude would become a divisive one.

(85c) We should most certainly like to see full unity in all doctrines, fundamental and non-fundamental, and must continually strive for such unity; but we are convinced, too, that Dr. Walther was right when he repeatedly stated that absolute unity cannot be achieved here on earth, human weakness being what it is.

(85d) The question at once presents itself whether we do not have to insist on loyalty to everything that God has taught. We do indeed; but it does not follow that we cannot have church fellowship with people who in this or that point of doctrine are in error. Church fellowship is not made impossible by the existence of error in the views of an individual or of a church body, provided these errors are of a non-fundamental nature and the right attitude toward Christ and the Word of God is maintained.

B. Memorial 609

(85e) The distinction between fundamental and non-fundamental doctrines comes into consideration when asking the question: How much of the divine truth must a person know in order to be saved? Or who is a member of the one holy Christian Church and therefore a Christian? However, this distinction dare never be considered when determining the answer to the question: With whom may we establish or continue to practice church fellowship? Here we must demand submission to the entire Word of God. Only then first can we acknowledge such a one as a brother in the faith. (Cf. *Synodalbericht*, Syn. Conf., 1888, pp. 10—11; Central District, 1867, p. 10.)

(86) Speaking of the requirements of confessional fellowship, our Church asserts in the Formula of Concord that it entertains heartfelt pleasure and love for, and is on its part sincerely inclined and anxious to advance, unity, but it must be a unity "by which His glory remains to God uninjured, nothing of the divine truth of the Holy Gospel is surrendered, *no room is given to the least error*" (Trigl., 1095).

(87) Our Synod therefore confesses in its *Brief Statement*: "We repudiate *unionism*, that is, church fellowship with the *adherents of false doctrine*" (Par. 28). (Our emphasis to show that the *Brief Statement* does not in any way qualify "adherents of false doctrine.")

(88) But in the essay under consideration, Dr. Arndt, after referring to the distinction between fundamental and non-fundamental doctrines, contends: "Church fellowship is not made impossible by the existence of error in the view of an individual or of a church body, provided these errors are of a non-fundamental nature and the right attitude toward Christ and the Word of God is maintained."

(89) That is the position of the former Iowa Synod. Distinguishing between "doctrines of faith" and "doctrines not necessary for salvation," it said: "There are doctrines, *even doctrines of the Bible*, concerning which members of our Church may hold different views and convictions without thereby being compelled to refuse each other church fellowship; and that these are the very doctrines for the sake of which the Missourians adjudge us to be heretical. In such matters unity should indeed be sought; but it is not absolutely required, as in the doctrines of faith." (Quoted in *Ebenezer*, p. 169. Emphasis by Dr. J. H. C. Fritz.)

(90) That is the position of the American Lutheran Church, which declared: "It is neither necessary nor possible to agree in all non-fundamental doctrines" (*C. T. M.*, 1939, p. 59). "Whoever

thinks that he must, on account of non-agreement in non-fundamentals, sever or reject church fellowship with brethren who bow as sincerely as he does to the Word of God, and who desire above all else to accord supreme authority to the Scriptures, should be made to understand that he separates himself from his brethren on account of something which has nothing to do with our salvation and stands far out in the periphery of Christian doctrine" (*In the Interest of Lutheran Unity*, p. 38).

(91) That is also the position of *A Statement*, of which Dr. Arndt is a signer. "Church fellowship is possible without complete agreement in details of doctrine and practice which have never been considered divisive in the Lutheran Church" (Par. 11).

(92) In short, what Missouri, in harmony with the Formula of Concord, has always rejected as a determining factor in the question of church fellowship is regarded by Dr. Arndt and the A. L. C. as a deciding factor in that question.

(93) *We therefore request Synod* to correct Dr. Arndt's essay so as to rule out the distinction between fundamental and non-fundamental doctrines as a factor in the question of church fellowship and to bring it into harmony with the position of Synod, that "the term 'non-fundamental doctrines' . . . should not be made to convey the idea that anything clearly revealed in Scripture, although not absolutely necessary for salvation, may be denied." (*Proceedings*, 1941, p. 302; cf. also Memorial 604, p. 292.)

C. Dr. Arndt's Comments

(94) My statement is: "Church fellowship is not made impossible by the existence of error in the views of an individual or of a church body provided these errors are of a non-fundamental nature and the right attitude toward Christ and the Word of God is maintained." Kindly note the following: a) I do not grant error the right to exist. Whatever is contrary to the Word of God must be criticized as an error, whether it refers to a fundamental or non-fundamental doctrine. That is why I include in my essay the statement that we do indeed have to insist on loyalty to everything that God has taught. b) At the same time we distinguish between fundamental and non-fundamental doctrines. Our fathers have always done that, as the quotation from Walther in the preceding paragraph has shown. c) This, too, is the position of the Holy Scriptures. The Apostle Paul, in Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8—10, distinguishes between the true position and erroneous positions held by certain people that were weak in the faith. The latter he wants to see treated with brotherly consideration. The points on which they erred were not of a nature to destroy their Christian faith. Cf. also 1 Cor. 3:11-15.

D. Comments of the Signers

(95) In his translation of the article in *Lehre und Wehre*, XIV, Dr. Arndt left out all references to Iowa, especially pp. 100—104.* Every denial of any clear teaching of Scripture is divisive of church fellowship. It is a different question: What position should we take toward the erring brother? But if a brother contradicts clear Scripture and persists and seeks to gain followers, he can no longer be treated as a weak brother. Also true of a church body. Dr. Arndt's position is the position of the Iowa Synod. — The matter is quite simple. The Catechism says. . . . The *Brief Statement* says. . . . We have the right to interpret the statement in the essay in the light of *A Statement*. It is unscriptural. — Dr. Arndt says: Non-fundamental doctrines are not divisive, they may become divisive. There is the point of difference. Error in any clear doctrine is divisive of fellowship. — What is our position? Behnken says: Whatever the Bible states must stand; yielding in non-fundamentals is tantamount to compromise. . . . There are two positions in Synod. We can't get an answer from Synod — since 1947. Which is right? How long are our congregations to wait? Arndt should be told that he is wrong. This dilly-dallying is disgusting. — Please do not throw Matthew 18 at us. This is not an excommunication procedure. It is a matter of correcting public doctrine. Matthew 18 will come later.

E. Conclusion of A. C. D. P.

(96) As is evidenced by Memorial 608, 4, d (p. 588), Memorial 612, 1, D (p. 600), Memorial 617, 3, C (p. 611), as well as Memorial 609, this point seems to be *the major objection to the essay*.

(97a) Objection is made to the statement of the essay (85d): “. . . but it does not follow that we cannot have church fellowship with people who in this or that point of doctrine are in error. Church fellowship is not made impossible by the existence of error in the views of an individual or of a church body provided these errors are of a non-fundamental nature and the right attitude toward Christ and the Word of God is maintained.”

(97b) This view seems to be supported by statements in *Lehre und Wehre*, Vol. XIV (1868), in a long article by Dr. Wal-

* Dr. Arndt informed two members of the *Praesidium* that this statement contains an error though of a purely personal nature. The signers say that in translating Walther's article to which they point he omitted all references to the Iowa Synod. The truth of the matter is that Dr. Wm. Arndt did not translate that section of Walther's essay, but Prof. Alex Guebert did, and he did it at the time when he was still pastor at Oak Glen, Ill. We consulted Professor Guebert, and he informed us that of his own accord, without any prompting from Dr. Wm. Arndt, he omitted those sections because he considered them no longer relevant.

ther on "The False Arguments for the Modern Theory of Open Questions." This article was translated by Dr. Arndt and published in *Concordia Theological Monthly*, Vol. X (1939), pp. 351ff. The Vorwort to this volume of *Lehre und Wehre* was not translated but contains some pertinent statements:

(97c) *L. u. W.*, XIV, p. 66: "Hiermit wollen wir nun erstlich keineswegs sagen, so bald an irgend einem Glied der Kirche irgend ein Gottes klarem Wort widersprechender Irrthum offenbar werde, dass dann alsobald mit ihm die kirchliche Gemeinschaft aufgehoben werden muesse. Liesse sich doch kaum ein grauenhafterer, gerade die damit beabsichtigte Einigkeit der Kirche zerstoerenderer Fanatismus denken. Hat doch die Kirche nie eine hoehere Stufe der Einigkeit in der Lehre erreicht, als die einer fundamentalen, und nur ein schwaermerischer Chiliast koennte hoffen, dass die Kirche je eine hoehere Stufe erreichen werde. So lange die Kirche noch im Fleische lebt, so lange ist dies ebenso unmoeglich, als dass sie vollkommen heilig im Leben und in der Liebe werde. Ganz recht schreibt daher Luther: 'So die Heiligen nicht irreten im Glauben und der Wahrheit, warum lehrte denn Petrus zunehmen im Glauben und Erkenntnis Christi? 2. Petr. 5, 11. Und Paulus lehrte zunehmen in Christo, auf dass wir nicht, wie die jungen Kinder, hin und her geweht und gefuehret werden von allerlei Wind der Lehren, Eph. 4, 12. 14? So viel aber uns am Glauben gebricht, so viel ist in uns Irrthum und Unglauben.'" (XIX:1381.)

(97d) "Hiermit wollen wir auch ferner keineswegs sagen, wenn in einer kirchlichen Gemeinschaft irgend ein das Fundament des Glaubens nicht umstossender, aber wider Gottes klares Wort streitender Irrthum noch herrscht, dass dieselbe damit schon den Charakter einer Kirche, mit der ein rechtlaeubiger Christ Gemeinschaft pflegen kann, verloren habe. . . ."

(97e) P. 67: "Mit obiger Erklaerung wollen wir aber endlich auch dies nicht sagen, dass unter den Gliedern der Kirche kein Unterschied zu machen sei und von allen ein gleich richtiges Urtheil auch ueber solche Punkte des biblischen Lehrgehalts gefordert werden muesse, die nicht zum dogmatischen Fundamente gehoeren. Kann es doch geschehen, dass ein *Einfaeltiger*, weil er die Richtigkeit und Notwendigkeit einer Consequenz nicht einzusehen vermag, selbst einen secundaeren Fundamental-Artikel bis an seinen Tod leugnet, ohne dass man ihn um dieser blossen behaerrlichen Leugnung oder allein um Festhaltung eines secundaer-fundamentalen Irrthums willen als einen Ketzer von der Gemeinschaft der Kirche

ausschliessen kann, wie viel mehr wird dies in Absicht auf solche Lehrpunkte der Fall sein, die gar nicht zu den fundamentalen Artikeln des christlichen Glaubens gehoeren! (Emphasis ours.)

(97f) C. T. M., X (1939), p. 261: "How is that? we are asked. Do you really wish to excommunicate everybody at once as a heretic who errs in nothing but a non-fundamental article, and do you intend at once to sever fellowship with an organization which is guilty of such a non-fundamental error? That we are far removed from entertaining such a thought we have stated above. What we maintain is this: On the one hand, *a non-fundamental error, even if it is contrary to the clear Word of God, must not be treated as a heresy, but in patient instruction it must be shown to be untenable, be refuted, opposed, and criticized.*" (Emphasis ours.)

(98a) On the other hand, there are statements in the same article in *Lehre und Wehre* which seem opposed to this view:

(98b) P. 66: "Wir koennen keine in Gottes Wort klar gelehrt oder Gottes klarem Worte widersprechende Lehre fuer eine offene Frage halten und behandeln, mag dieselbe eine noch so untergeordnete und vom Centrum der Heilslehre noch so weit ab in der Peripherie liegende zu sein scheinen oder wirklich sein."

(98c) Dr. Arndt makes some statements that seem opposed to the view that "it does not follow that we cannot have church fellowship with people who in this or that point of doctrine are in error," etc. (97a).

(98d) For example: "I do not grant error the right to exist." "Whatever is contrary to the Word of God must be criticized as an error, whether it refers to a fundamental or non-fundamental doctrine." "If a person should think that because a certain teaching is non-fundamental, he may reject it, then he offends against the majesty of God's Word, and his attitude would become a divisive one."

(98e) C. T. M., p. 255 (Walther):

"Others appeal to the fact that in this life there can be no absolute unity but merely a fundamental one. . . . For this reason, they assert, the old orthodox dogmatists taught with respect to doctrines that are non-fundamental one may without jeopardy to one's salvation argue for or against their acceptance. — We reply as follows: This justification of open questions rests on a gross misunderstanding and confusion. In considering the question: What belongs to the fundamental articles which a man must know or which one may not deny? the point at issue is not what a Christian may accept or reject

in matters of faith, but rather how much of divine truth is required in order that a person may arrive at, and be preserved in, saving faith and how much of saving truth a person may be ignorant of or deny and oppose without making the existence and continuance of true, justifying, and saving faith in his heart an impossibility."

(98f) *C. T. M.*, p. 258 (Walther):

"When the question is asked: Which doctrines contained in the Scriptures must be accepted? then it no longer is proper to distinguish between the various doctrines (as to their importance), a distinction which is justified when articles of *faith* are dwelt upon. If a man has become convinced that a certain matter is taught in the Holy Scriptures, then his attempt to destroy or remove the smallest letter, even a tittle, of such teaching excludes (him) from the kingdom of heaven, while otherwise a person may entertain even a serious error which involves acceptance of a heresy without losing faith, grace, and salvation."

(99a) Perhaps the two viewpoints can be reconciled in Luther's dictum: "Irren schadet der Kirche nichts, aber im Irrtum bleiben, das ist unmöglich" (*Lehre und Wehre*, XIV, p. 66).

(99b) *Dr. Walther* says (continuing the paragraph quoted 97f.), *C. T. M.*, p. 262:

"On the other hand, however, if a church has exhausted all means of bringing such an erring brother to the acknowledgment of the truth and his adherence to the respective error evidently is not due to insufficient intellectual understanding of Scripture-teaching, and hence through this non-fundamental error it becomes manifest that he consciously, stubbornly, and obstinately contradicts the divine Word and that accordingly through his error he subverts the organic foundation of faith (the Scriptures), then such an erring person, like all others that persevere in mortal sins, must no longer be borne with, but fraternal relations with him must be terminated. The same thing applies to a whole church-body which errs in a non-fundamental doctrine. It is very true that in this life absolute unity in faith and doctrine is not possible, and no higher unity than a fundamental one can be attained. This, however, by no means implies that in a church-body errors of a non-fundamental nature which become manifest and which contradict the clear Word of God must not be attacked and that a Church can be regarded as a true church and be treated as such if it either makes such non-fundamental errors a part of its confession and, with injury to the organic foundation, in spite of all admonition, stubbornly clings to these errors or

in a unionistic fashion and in a spirit of indifference insists that deviation from God's clear Word in such points need be of no concern to us."

(199c) C. T. M., p. 356: ". . . that a point can become divisive only after the respective error has in vain been proved from the Holy Scriptures, after all repeated admonitions have been without fruit, and after it has become evident that the erring person is inwardly convinced of his error and that he therefore consciously contends against the foundation of faith, either the real or dogmatic or merely the organic foundation, Luther states emphatically in the well-known passage: 'Augustine says with respect to himself: *Errare potero, haereticus non ero*; that is, I can err, but I do not want to become a heretic. The reason is this: Heretics not only err, but they refuse to be instructed; they defend their error as right and contend against the truth which they have come to know and against their own conscience. Of such people Paul says, Titus 3:10-11: "A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition reject, knowing that he that is such is subverted and sinneth," being *autocatacritos*, that is, he deliberately and finally chooses to remain in the condemnation resulting from his error. But St. Augustine will gladly confess his error and accept instruction. Hence he cannot become a heretic even if he should err. All other saints take the same course and willingly throw their hay, stubble, and wood into the fire in order that they may remain on the saving foundation. This very thing we also have done and are still doing.' (*Concerning Councils and Churches*, A. D. 1539, XVI:2663f.) As long therefore as the erring person has not been convicted of subverting the organic foundation through his error, and as long as he has not become stubborn in his attitude, no error constitutes him a heretic. The same thing applies to a whole church-body. Yes, should the error pertain to less principal points clearly revealed in the Scriptures but of a non-fundamental character, then even a stubborn clinging to such points does not make a teacher a heretic but merely a schismatic, and his association does not get to be a sect, but a schismatic body. Accordingly in our Church, Flacius, who stubbornly defended the erroneous teaching that sin belongs to a man's essence, and Huber, who stubbornly taught that predestination is universal, did not become heretics but *schismatics*, whom orthodox churches could not admit to their pulpits, and if these men had founded church-bodies embodying the errors of their leaders in their doctrinal platform, these bodies, *caeteris paribus*, would not have been sects but schismatic associations." (Emphasis ours.)

(99d). *With this background (97a—99c), Dr. Arndt's statement:* "Church fellowship is not made impossible by the existence of error in the views of an individual or of a church body provided these errors are of a non-fundamental nature and the right attitude toward Christ and the Word of God is maintained," *may be understood to be correct.* It might be amplified, however, to read: "Church fellowship is not made impossible by the *mere existence* of error in the views of an individual or of a church body provided these errors are of a non-fundamental nature and they are *not willfully and stubbornly persisted in* when shown to be contrary to the clear Word of God."

(99e) The essay here raises the question of a general principle. In the opinion of this committee the points touched on in this report (1—5) are not errors held by the American Lutheran Church. Nor do we wish to be understood as saying the Missouri Synod should be indifferent to error and fraternize with churches with which we are not in official fellowship (unionism).

(100) With regard to the criticisms made in Memorial 609 we would point out that: 1) It is not correct to say "this distinction (fundamental and non-fundamental doctrines) dare never be considered when determining the answer to the question: With whom may we establish or continue to practice church fellowship?" Since Scripture makes the distinction (cf. Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 1950, I, p. 80), we may, also when treating the question of church fellowship. This distinction itself is implied in "submission to the entire Word of God." The signers probably meant that this distinction should not be considered when error is involved. 2) All the objections raised are directed against denying the *clear* Word of God. We have shown in the treatment of the points above that there is no denial of *clear* Scripture. There is disagreement between some views because the Scriptures are not clear on those points. And Dr. Pieper says (p. 93, *Christian Dogmatics*, 1950): "Open questions are such questions as inevitably arise in our study of the Scripture *doctrines* [our emphasis] but are not answered by Scripture at all or at least not clearly. And Scripture enjoins us to let them remain open questions. If we presume to answer them and ask men to accept our opinion as divine truth, we would be rejecting those Scripture passages which forbid us to add anything to God's Word (Deut. 4:2; 12:32; 1 Peter 4:11)." 3) According to this statement of Dr. Pieper and an examination of the points above, we conclude that there are questions related to doctrines of the Bible concerning which members of our Church may hold different views and convictions without thereby being compelled to refuse each other church fellowship. We would not say: "It is neither necessary nor possible to agree in all non-fundamental doctrines," because some non-fundamental doctrines are clearly taught in

Scripture. All that we say is that the doctrines of the Antichrist, the conversion of the Jews, the resurrection of the martyrs, the beginning of the thousand years, *as explained above*, are not so clearly revealed in Scripture that we have the right to condemn the views expressed as false doctrine. Dr. Pieper adds to the statement given above: "Every true theologian must learn not only to speak, but also to keep silence. He should speak where and as far as God's Word speaks; he should hold his tongue where God's Word is silent. He who has not learned this art of silence and dares to speak where God's Word is silent is condemned by Jer. 23:16: 'Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you; they make you vain; they speak a vision of their own heart and not out of the mouth of the Lord.' He should also study 1 Tim. 6:3ff."

A. Essay

8. Those Weak in Faith

(101) If absolute correctness were a requisite for fellowship, how many of our congregations could continue to exist? How can a synod, which consists of congregations, remain a live organization if positive doctrinal correctness of all individuals in the various congregations were the essential condition to be fulfilled? The Word of God has removed the agony which would result from such requirements by telling us that we must deal gently with those weak in the faith and not reject them on account of the misconceptions under which they labor. Think of Rom. 14:1: "Him that is weak in the faith receive, but not to doubtful disputations," or, translated more literally, "Him that is weak in the faith receive not for strife about opinions."

(102) In the following Paul mentions three matters on which there were differences of opinion: The question whether special days should be kept, the eating of certain foods, and the drinking of wine. He says the weak are not to be spurned on account of their erroneous attitude on these questions, but they are to be treated as brethren. We see then that our Synod took the right course when it stated in 1938 concerning certain non-fundamental doctrines that their non-acceptance need not be divisive of church fellowship, provided, of course, that the authority of the Scriptures is not questioned.

B. Memorial 609

(103) In the essay under consideration, Dr. Arndt also improperly and inadequately defines "those weak in the faith" and the attitude to be taken toward them in the words: "Dr. Walther was right when he repeatedly stated that absolute unity cannot be achieved here on earth, human weakness being what it is. The question at once presents itself whether we do not have to insist

on loyalty to everything that God has taught. We do indeed; but it does not follow that we cannot have church fellowship with people who in this or that point of doctrine are in error. Church fellowship is not made impossible by the existence of error in the views of an individual or of a church body, provided these errors are of a non-fundamental nature and the right attitude toward Christ and the Word of God is maintained. . . . We must deal gently with those weak in the faith and not reject them on account of the misconceptions under which they labor."

(104) *We therefore request Synod* to correct and amplify the paragraph which seeks to define "those weak in the faith" so that the following Scriptural truths are included:

(105) a. That an individual or church body can only then be considered "weak" if the error which has arisen is "due to a deficiency of knowledge or of precipitancy" (*Lehre und Wehre*, XIV, p. 105), and if the individual or church body *proves* that the proper attitude toward God's Word is being held by acknowledging and removing the error called to their attention by such as possess a correct knowledge of Scriptural truth. A church cannot be dealt with as "weak" when it has made these errors a part of its confession, clinging to them in spite of admonition through several generations, or if it insists that any points of doctrine deviating from God's Word be treated as a matter of indifference. (Cf. 1 Thess. 5:14; 1 Cor. 9:22; James 5:19-20; also *Lehre und Wehre*, XIV, 107; *Brief Statement*, par. 29.)

(106) b. That our treatment of the "weak" is never limited to those who err in non-fundamental doctrines, but applies also to fundamental doctrines. (Acts 15:1; cf. *Lehre und Wehre*, XIV, pp. 105, 106.)

(107) Finally, in order that the first objective of our Synod, namely, the "conservation and promotion of the unity of the true faith," may be attained.

(108) *We therefore request Synod* to require of Dr. Arndt that he agree to these corrections of his essay.

C. Dr. Arndt's Comments

(109) The Apostle Paul in various places speaks of those that are weak in the faith. This is the case chiefly in Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8—10. There are other passages that belong to this class, for instance, the beginning of Romans 15. In the Gospels we have a very significant passage given — Matt. 12:20 (the bruised reed and the smoking flax). The fact that these people are in error in one or the other point does not deprive them of the precious status of children of God. In the *Synodalbericht des Oestlichen Distrikts*, 1868, we find, p. 15, this sentence: "Man denke nur, wie es in unseren eigenen Gemeinden aussieht; wollte man da exami-

nieren, wie viel rationalistische, methodistische, baptistische und papistische Irrtuemer wuerden da noch zutage treten, selbst bei solchen Christen, an deren rechtschaffenem Glauben wir doch nicht zu zweifeln haben." My contention is that we must not forget that in our own congregations we have to proceed with much charity if we are not willing to destroy the work of the Holy Spirit. Let us then use charity, too, in dealing with those outside our congregations.

D. Comments of the Signers

(110) Every denial of any clear teaching of Scripture is divisive of church fellowship. It is a different question: What position should we take toward the erring brother? But if a brother contradicts clear Scripture and persists and seeks to gain followers, he can no longer be treated as a weak brother. Also true of a church body.

E. Conclusion of A. C. D. P.

(111) We believe that the distinction made by the signers (between weak Christians in general and teachers or church bodies) is an important one that must be observed in this matter.

(112) We would deny no one the status of a child of God simply because he errs in some doctrines as long as he clings to Christ as his Savior. However, if in our congregations a member is found to hold a false doctrine, even though we do not at once put him away, but admonish and exhort him, if he willfully and stubbornly persists in holding to the error and even proclaims it as truth, we do sever fellowship with him (Titus 3:11).

(113) Teachers of the Church and church bodies in their official declarations have a greater responsibility than simple Christians and cannot be regarded as weak when they willfully and stubbornly persist in teaching error. (We do not believe that the A. L. C. is guilty of error in the points treated. We are here discussing the question raised by the essay.)

(114) Dr. Pieper (*op. cit.*, p. 89ff.) says:

"Teaching in the house of God, the Church, is a most serious matter. The teachers of the Church must never forget:

"1. Scripture nowhere gives any man the license to deviate in any point from God's Word. On the contrary, the regulations governing the household of God until the end of time read: 'Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you' (Matt. 28:20).

"2. Every departure from the Word of Christ, as found in the Word of His Apostles, is expressly designated an offense (Rom. 16:17). Through a special gracious intervention of God the error may not harm its author, but it remains an offense to

others, to those who, unable to discount the error, embrace it in its full implications and, spreading it, in some cases under the aegis of the 'fathers,' cause further division in the Church. In order to remove, as far as possible, the offense resulting from the departure from the Word of God, public teachers have felt the need of publicly retracting the errors they formerly taught." (Augustine and Luther.)

"3. Everyone who rejects the testimony of Scripture concerning one doctrine, actually, though he is not fully aware of it, invalidates the Christian principle of cognition. . . .

"Here, too, Luther makes the reservation: 'Except where there are weak Christians who are ready to receive instruction and do not stubbornly contradict.' . . . But the situation is always fraught with danger, particularly so when controversies arise. . . . The greatest danger sets in when in doctrinal controversies the erring Christian, confronted with the clear Word of Scripture, clings to error in spite of the clear Scripture and the power of the Holy Ghost active in it. Then it may easily happen that the 'Christian erring,' i. e., erring from weakness, in which faith still survives, ceases, and the 'unchristian erring,' the will to err, takes its place, which renders faith impossible. That is the case described in Titus 3:10-11: 'A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject, knowing that he that is such is subverted and sinneth, being condemned of himself.'

"4. Finally we should always bear in mind that, like sin in the sphere of morality, so every error in the sphere of doctrine has the tendency to spread and to infect other doctrines with its virus. . . ."

(115) The passages Romans 14 and 15; 1 Corinthians 8—10 treat of moral errors, things indifferent (*adiaphora*), and do not apply to doctrinal matters of the kind with which we are concerned in the essay. We, therefore, do not agree with the essay here.*

* Two members of the *Praesidium* consulted Dr. Wm. Arndt, and he offered the following statement in explanation of his position: "It is true that Romans 14 and 15 and 1 Corinthians 8—10 treat of *adiaphora*, but when *adiaphora* are not dealt with as *adiaphora*, false doctrine arises. The weak Christians whom Paul speaks of in the passages mentioned actually held doctrinal errors. One of the issues was concerned with the keeping of days. The weak Christians held the view that a certain day had to be observed, presumably the Jewish Sabbath. That was false doctrine. But these Christians were not propagandists of error, but humble children of God, who were eager to do the Lord's will; unfortunately, however, they had not grasped fully the principle of Christian liberty. It was different with the people whom the Apostle mentions in Col. 2:16-23. These held the same error, but they were propagandists that were troubling the church; against them he utters words of stern warning."

Summary of A. C. D. P.'s Findings

(116) Concerning the eight points treated in the essay and objected to in the memorials listed above, our findings are as follows:

1. *The Visible Side of the Church.* We agree with the essay that this is a matter of terminology. There is no false doctrine implied.

2. *Antichrist.* We agree with the essay. The teaching that the Pope is the Antichrist is not a clearly expressed doctrine of Scripture but an historical judgment based on Scripture.

3. *Conversion of the Jews.* We agree with Dr. Arndt and Dr. Walther that we need not regard the divergence in question as divisive of church fellowship. We would not give Dr. Arndt's reason but Dr. Walther's.

4. *Resurrection of the Martyrs.* We agree with the essay that we need not protest the view expressed as heretical. No proof sustains the charge of gross and damnable chiliasm, perversion of the text, or something contradicting other clear passages of Scripture.

5. *Beginning of the Thousand Years.* We agree with the essay on this point.

6. *Definition of Non-Fundamental Doctrines.* Dr. Arndt's definition, with the explanations offered by him, is correct as far as it goes.

7. *Non-Fundamental Doctrines and Church Fellowship.* With the background furnished in this report, Dr. Arndt's statement may be understood to be correct. It might be amplified, however, to read: "Church fellowship is not made impossible by the mere existence of error in the views of an individual or of a church body provided these errors are of a non-fundamental nature and they are not persisted in when shown to be contrary to the clear Word of God."

The essay here raises the question of a general principle. In the opinion of this Committee the points touched on in this Report (1—5) are not errors held by the American Lutheran Church. Nor do we wish to be understood as saying the Missouri Synod should be indifferent to error and fraternize with churches with which we are not in official fellowship (unionism).

8. *Those Weak in the Faith.* We disagree with the essay. We must distinguish between Christians and erring teachers or church bodies.*

* Two members of the *Praesidium* consulted Dr. Wm. Arndt, and he offered the following statement in explanation of his position: "There are weak ministers and weak laymen, weak individuals and weak church bodies. The essay might have included a paragraph showing that when we deal with weak Christians, a difference is to be made between ministers and laymen and between church bodies and individuals. These distinctions are of great practical importance."

V. ADVICE TO THE PRAESIDIUM

1. Answer to the Signers of Memorial 608, 4, a

(117) The question of the signers is: "Does the venerable Synod approve or does it reject the teaching as found in the classrooms of the St. Louis Seminary, in conference discussions, and in the *Lutheran Witness*:"

"a. That 'there is a visible manifestation of the invisible Church,' that 'we do not declare invisibility to be an attribute of the Church'? See the *Brief Statement*, Par. 25; exposition of the Small Catechism, Question 176, A."

(118) Without granting the truth of the statements made in the opening paragraph of this memorial and without investigating the truth of the statements in the opening paragraph of Section 4, on the basis of Paragraphs 19—27 of this Report, we would say: If by the expression "there is a visible manifestation of the invisible Church" is meant the same as "the visible side of the Church" in Memorial 609 (Paragraphs 19—27 of this Report), then there is no false doctrine involved. From the memorial we cannot determine just what is meant. We admit that the expression by itself is not clear. To imply grave error by merely quoting one expression is unjustifiable.

(119) The correctness of the expression "we do not declare invisibility to be an attribute of the Church" is a matter of terminology. Perhaps the signers feared that the invisibility of the Church was being denied, since they coupled it with the former expression. There is no intention to deny the invisibility of the Church when this expression is used.

2. Answer to the Signers of Memorial 608, 4, d

(120) The question is: "Does the venerable Synod approve or reject the teaching as found in the classrooms of the St. Louis Seminary, in conference discussions, and in the *Lutheran Witness*:"

"d. That, as recently repeatedly stated by Dr. William Arndt, there are 'doctrines' of Holy Writ which are not divisive of church fellowship? See the venerable doctor's essay at the convention of the Western District, 1948, and in the two California Districts, 1949."

(121) What is meant by the word "doctrine" used by the signers? *Synod adopted a definition* in 1944 (*Proceedings*, 1944, p. 250): "A Scriptural doctrine is a truth contained in, expressed by, or properly drawn from Scripture."

(122) Synod also repudiated unionism in the *Brief Statement* (Par. 28), "that is, church fellowship with the adherents of false doctrine." In 1941 (*Proceedings*, 1941, p. 302) Synod declared: "It be understood that the term 'non-fundamental doctrines' which

has been used should not be made to convey the idea that anything clearly revealed in Scripture, although not absolutely necessary for salvation, may be denied."

(123) *Answer to the Signers*: Synod still stands where it has always stood: The persistent denial of any clear doctrine of Scripture is divisive of church fellowship (Matt. 28:20; Rom. 16:17; Titus 3:10-11). However, we must beware of calling things clear doctrines of Scripture which are not. For example, when it is stated that the Pope is the Antichrist is a "doctrine of Scripture," the word "doctrine" is not in harmony with Synod's definition (121). Cf. Report above on other points as well.

3. Answer to the Signers of Memorial 612, D

Proceedings, 1950, p. 600

(124) "D. Do you accept, or do you reject, the unscriptural position, taken in an essay delivered before two synodical Districts, where Dr. W. Arndt, in speaking of *establishing* fellowship, says: 'Church fellowship is not made impossible by the existence of error in the views of an individual or a church body provided these errors are of a non-fundamental nature and the right attitude toward Christ and the Word of God is maintained?'"

(125) *Answer*: Dr. Arndt's statement: "Church fellowship is not made impossible by the existence of error in the views of an individual or of a church body provided these errors are of a non-fundamental nature and the right attitude toward Christ and the Word of God is maintained" *may be understood to be correct*. It might be amplified, however, to read: "Church fellowship is not made impossible by the *mere existence* of error in the views of an individual or of a church body provided these errors are of a non-fundamental nature and they are *not persisted in* when shown to be contrary to the clear Word of God."

The essay here raises the question of a general principle. In the opinion of this Committee the points touched on in this Report (1—5) are not errors held by the American Lutheran Church. Nor do we wish to be understood as saying the Missouri Synod should be indifferent to error and fraternize with churches with which we are not in official fellowship (unionism).

4. Answer to the Signers of Memorial 617, 3, C

Proceedings, 1950, p. 611

(126) "C. In an essay read at the Southern California and the California and Nevada Districts of Synod Dr. W. Arndt declared that the false positions held by the American Lutheran Church on the 'visible side' of the Church, the Antichrist, the Resurrection of the Martyrs, and the Conversion of the Jews are merely questions of interpretation or terminology in the face of the fact that

Synod in its *Brief Statement* rejects these teachings as unscriptural. In the same essay he also continues to advocate the unscriptural position of Point 11 of *A Statement* that 'church fellowship is possible without complete agreement in details of doctrine and practice which have never been considered divisive in the Lutheran Church.'"

(127) *Answer*: The positions of the American Lutheran Church reported by Dr. Arndt in his essay cannot be called "false" if by this is meant that a clear doctrine of Scripture is denied. Cf. Report above on all points. It is not strictly true that Dr. Arndt declared these positions are "merely questions of interpretation or terminology." See Dr. Arndt's comments above. Nor is it true that the *Brief Statement* rejects these teachings as unscriptural. (For explanation see above under each point.) The answer to the church fellowship question is given in (123) above.

5. Answer to the Signers of Memorials 637 and 638

Proceedings, 1950, pp. 641—642

(128) These two almost identical memorials request Synod "To declare that it holds it to be a Scriptural principle that every error publicly taught and propagated must be retracted and corrected as publicly and as extensively as its influence for evil may extend."

(129) *Answer*: The general principle is Scriptural and correct: serious or persistent public error in doctrine or in practice should be publicly corrected. 1 Cor. 5:6 can be applied to both, Gal. 2:11 refers to practice. Even if the individual or group that errs does not retract the error, it should be corrected publicly. It may be questioned whether the public correction can be made "as extensively as its influence may extend." That distance would surely not be agreed upon by all. The people in an audience (convention) or on a publication subscription list change from time to time. It may not be practical to carry out literally the provision "as publicly and as extensively as its influence for evil may extend." If it is Synod-wide correction, made in the official organs of Synod or at a synodical (District) convention, it should prove sufficient. But it cannot be too emphatically stated that all carping at minor errors and publishing of suspicious judgments are to be condemned as contrary to the Eighth Commandment.

6. Answer to the Signers of Memorial 609

Proceedings, 1950, pp. 590—597

(130) This is the memorial treated at great length in this Report. See: Section IV. "FINDINGS," pp. 4—28.

(131) A. REQUEST (page 594 of *Proceedings*, 1950): "We therefore request Synod to correct Dr. Arndt's essay on 'Present

Hindrances to Lutheran Union' with respect to its presentation on the five non-fundamentals (pp. 19—20) so as to bring it into conformity with the Scriptural teaching and confession of our Synod."

(132) *Answer*: The essay needs no correction on these points except those few noted in the explanation given above, e. g., under point 3 (51).

(133) B. REQUEST (page 594 of *Proceedings*, 1950): "We therefore request Synod to strike the assertion: 'They are called non-fundamental because they have no connection with the foundation of our faith.' In their stead we ask that the following be inserted: 'They are called non-fundamental because they do not constitute the foundation or object of faith, in so far as faith apprehends the forgiveness of sins and makes us children of God' (cf. Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, I, 1950, p. 91)."

(134) *Answer*: This is a matter of terminology. With Dr. Arndt's explanations his definition is correct even if it is not in the same words or as extensive as Pieper's statement. It would be childish to insist that everybody in the Missouri Synod must always use the same words to say the same thing.

(135) C. REQUEST (page 596, *Proceedings*, 1950): "We therefore request Synod to correct Dr. Arndt's essay so as to rule out the distinction between fundamental and non-fundamental doctrines as a factor in the question of church fellowship and to bring it into harmony with the position of Synod that 'the term "non-fundamental doctrines" . . . should not be made to convey the idea that anything clearly revealed in Scripture, although not absolutely necessary for salvation, may be denied.' (*Proceedings*, 1941, p. 302; cf. also Memorial 604, p. 292.)"

(136) *Answer*: The persistent denial of any *clear* doctrine of Scripture, fundamental or non-fundamental, is divisive of church fellowship. The statement that the Pope is the Antichrist, e. g., is not a *clear doctrine* of Scripture, but an historical judgment based on Scripture. Cf. (123). We believe that the essay should be amplified to agree with the suggestions in (99d, e).

(137) D. REQUEST (page 596, *Proceedings*, 1950): "We therefore request Synod to correct and amplify the paragraph which seeks to define 'those weak in the faith' so that the following Scriptural truths are included:

"a. That an individual or church body can only then be considered 'weak' if the error which has arisen is 'due to a deficiency of knowledge or to precipitancy' (*Lehre und Wehre*, XIV, p. 105), and if the individual or church body *proves* that the proper attitude toward God's Word is being held by acknowledging and removing the error called to their attention by such as possess a correct knowledge of Scriptural truth. A church cannot be dealt

with as 'weak' when it has made these errors a part of its confession, clinging to them in spite of admonition through several generations, or if it insists that any points of doctrine deviating from God's Word be treated as a matter of indifference. Cf. 1 Thess. 5:14; 1 Cor. 9:22; also *Lehre und Wehre*, XIV, p. 107; *Brief Statement*, Par. 29.)

"b. That our treatment of the 'weak' is never to be limited to those who err in non-fundamental doctrine, but applies also to fundamental doctrines (Acts 15:1; cf. *Lehre und Wehre*, XIV, pp. 105—106)."

(138) *Answer*: The paragraph or statement in the essay about the weak in faith should be clarified to make a distinction in our treatment of Christians as individuals and as church bodies or groups with whom we are to have church fellowship. Our reasons are given above (111) to (115). (Cf. (116), footnote under 8.)

(139) E. REQUEST (page 597, *Proceedings*, 1950): "Finally, in order that the first objective of our Synod, namely, the 'conservation and promotion of the unity of the true faith,' may be attained,

"We therefore request Synod to require of Dr. Arndt that he agree to these corrections of his essay."

(139) *Answer*: For the sake of unity Dr. Arndt (and the Districts and faculty) should agree to the additions and corrections suggested in this Report regarding the two points "Non-Fundamental Doctrines and Church Fellowship" and "Those Weak in the Faith."

(140) The signers of Memorial 609 should agree to the other points. "God's name should always be hallowed among us, even though this should require the abasement of men (John 3:30)." "Public error should be publicly retracted."

(141) F. MEMORIAL 609, FINAL PARAGRAPH (page 597, *Proceedings*, 1950): "We hereby advise Synod that in a contrary case Synod must be viewed as a body which has forfeited its orthodox character according to its own official confession. (*Brief Statement*, Par. 29; cf. *Lehre und Wehre*, 36, p. 262: 'We Missourians consider a church body, as a body, orthodox only when the true doctrine resounds from all its pulpits and lecture chairs and in all writings which appear in public within such church body; when every erroneous teaching is *stopped* in the manner prescribed by God as soon as it makes its appearance. We Missourians must and want to be judged according to the doctrine which is taught by our individual pastors, be it in San Francisco or in New York, St. Paul or New Orleans, or in our publications, immaterial whether they appear officially or unofficially. If it were shown us

that even but one pastor were preaching false doctrine, and we would not put a stop to this false doctrine, we would thereby have ceased to be an orthodox synod and would have become a unionistic fellowship.)

(142) *Answer:* In view of the misunderstanding displayed in the signers' treatment of the essay's points, the quotation of this statement can be regarded as little less than fanaticism. It also shows the same dependent spirit upon tradition (Missourian though it be) which was shown in the frequent reference to the fathers throughout their treatment of the essay. No positive Scriptural proof apart from tradition was given to sustain their objections to the first five points of the essay. The paucity of applicable Scriptural references is an unhealthy sign when such serious charges are made. Dr. Arndt and the Missouri Synod are just as vitally concerned with maintaining the TRUTH OF GOD'S WORD as are the signers of Memorial 609. Merely to brandish ecclesiastical clichés, such as "Word of God," "the Truth," "orthodoxy," "false doctrine," is not using the sword of the Spirit. We are not dealing with the Iowa Synod of 1875. We are trying to deal with the American Lutheran Church of 1950. In dealing with Christians we will take them at their word and not twist their words to mean something that we suspect they might mean. And we need some patience in trying to reach an understanding of what they mean. More conferences with them personally and more acquaintance with what they have to say and, above all, more genuine study of the Scriptures will make us a little more independent of the fathers. We cannot inherit their faith simply by repeating their phraseology. We must get it where they got it — not in their fathers, but in the Scriptures.

(143) A great deal of misunderstanding could have been, and can still be, avoided if men who are in serious disagreement will sit down together and talk things over. Writing so that there is no possibility of misunderstanding is always a futile attempt. It usually leads to more and more argument. Much of such writing is a subtle — though perhaps unconscious — form of pride posing as champion of the truth. If there were less suspicion, more humble and patient endeavor to understand others, more true searching of the Scriptures, there would be a great deal less writing and a great deal more unity and peace in the Missouri Synod.

THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON DOCTRINE
AND PRACTICE

WALTER NITSCHKE, *Chairman*

A. J. MEYER

OTTOMAR KRUEGER

CARL A. EBERHARD, *Secretary*